

Natural Resource News in South Carolina

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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USDA PROVIDES MORE THAN \$42.5 MILLION FOR NATURAL DISASTER RECOVERY

Pickens County to Receive \$1.1 Million for June 2006 Rain Event

COLUMBIA, Jan. 25, 2007-USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist Walter W. Douglas announced that South Carolina was one of 13 states to receive funding to provide natural disaster recovery. 42.5 million dollars was distributed nationwide, and Pickens County was one of the recipients. The County will use the funds to repair damage following a June 2006 storm.

"These funds will provide critical assistance and continue the federal partnership for environmental restoration projects on private lands damaged by natural disaster," Douglas said. Last June, heavy rain produced damaging floodwaters throughout Pickens County. Rain totals ranged between 9-14 inches over a 24-hour period, and the excess water shut down roads, overtook stream banks, and closed businesses.

"This was a major rain event that created a flash flood. There were 22 roads closed and extensive damage to culverts and bridges throughout the county," explained Ross Stewart, NRCS Soil Conservationist. NRCS, in conjunction with the Pickens County Soil and Water Conservation District, and Pickens County, will oversee the distribution of the \$1,170,000 that South Carolina received. The funding is being made available through the NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program and includes technical and financial assistance.

Through EWP, NRCS will provide up to 75 percent of the funds needed to restore the natural function of a watershed damaged by a natural disaster. The community or local sponsor for the work must pay the remaining cost-share, which can be provided by cash and/or in-kind services. EWP assists with the implementation of critical emergency measures such as removal of debris from streams, protecting destabilized streambanks, establishing cover on critically eroding lands, and repairing conservation practices needed to relieve the imminent hazards to life and property created by natural disaster. All measures taken must be environmentally and economically sound and generally benefit more than one property owner.

NRCS provides products and services that enable people to be good stewards of the nation's soil, water, and related natural resources on non-Federal lands. Additional information about EWP and other USDA conservation programs is available at USDA Service Centers nationwide and online at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/ewp/>.

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